

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2567

C O N F I D E N T I A L FREETOWN 0296

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI PFOR SL

SUBJECT: REGIONAL ARMS RESTRAINTS STUDY

REF: STATE 20621

1. EMBASSY CONSIDERS DEVELOPMENT OF POSITIVE PROGRAM TO ENCOURAGE RESTRAINT UNNECESSARY WITH RESPECT TO SIERRA LEONE. GOSL HAS NO SOPHISTICATED WEAPONRY AND NO APPARENT INTENTION OBTAINING ANY. WHILE THIS PARTLY DUE TO EXTREME FINANCIAL CRISIS PRESENTLY (GOSL HAS RECENTLY DECLINED ACCEPT THREE CHINESE HELICOPTERS SHIPPED TO FREETOWN, IN PART DUE ANTICIPATED HIGH COST OF OPERATION), EMBASSY DOES NOT BELIEVE GOSL WOULD BE SEVERELY TEMPTED TO TRY OBTAIN SOPHISTICATED WEAPONRY EVEN IF BUDGETARY PRESSURE RELIEVED.

2. SHOULD BE NOTED IN THIS CONNECTION THAT, ALMOST UNIQUELY AMONG AFRICAN COUNTRIES, SIERRA LEONE HAS ONLY TWO CONTINGUOUS NEIGHBORS, LIBERIA AND GUINEA. SL RELATIONS WITH LIBERIA EXTREMELY CLOSE AND THERE ABSOLUTELY NO EVIDENCE THAT GOSL CONSIDERS THERE ANY THREAT FROM THAT DIRECTION. GOSL RELATIONS WITH GUINEA SOMEWHAT MORE PRICKLY, BUT AGAIN THERE LITTLE EVIDENCE GOSL CONSIDERS THAT GUINEA CONSTITUTES ANY SERIOUS MILITARY THREAT. BASIC REASON GOSL HAS OBTAINED EVEN THE LIMITED CONVENTIONAL WEAPONRY THAT IT HAS ACQUIRED APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN KEEP MILITARY

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HAPPY AND IN SUPPORT OF GOVERNMENT IN EVENT OF INTERNAL

POLITICAL DISRUPTION.

3. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, EMBASSY CONSIDERS THERE
NEITHER NEED NOR DESIRABLE ROLE AT PRESENT TIME FOR ANY
USG EFFORTS ENCOURAGE SIERRA LEONE TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT
BEYOND WHAT IT HAS ALREADY IMPOSED ON ITSELF FOR
WHATEVER REASON.
SAMUELS

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NNN

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